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Synopses of Important Articles.

DID AMOS APPROVE THE CALF-WORSHIP AT BETHEL? By PROFESSOR L. B. PATON, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. XIII., 1894. Pp. 80-90.

The "exilian editor" of Kings (1 Kings 12:28-30) declares that the calf-worship of Bethel was a sin, though he recognizes that it was not Jeroboam's intention to apostatize from the worship of Jehovah, and that the calf-worship which is condemned was a real Jehovah-worship. Not Elijah, or Elisha, or Jehu attacked it. The ten tribes regarded themselves throughout their history as Jehovah-worshippers. Amos does not denounce the calves. Did he then approve of this cult? So some scholars infer from his silence. The argument against this inference is as follows: (1) Hosea denounces calf-worship vehemently and uncompromisingly as idolatry. Can he who is so closely related to Amos in time and spiritual sympathy as well as literary dependence have taken this step independently of his predecessor? Hardly. (2) Amos asserted the more fundamental fact which involved condemnation of the calf-worship, viz., that the God worshiped at Bethel was not Jehovah at all. The popular idea of Jehovah was that he was the tutelary god of Israel who would always protect his people, could be appeased by sacrifices, and whose "day" would bring Israel glory. Amos set over against this idea of Jehovah as national god the conception of "Jehovah of hosts," by which he meant Jehovah as ruler of the universe. Such passages teaching the universal causality of God as 3:6; 4:13; 5:8; 9:5, 6 cannot be set aside as glosses. They are the keystone of the argument, the thoughts that lift Amos above his age and gave him therefore a message to his age. In opposing Israel's particularistic idea of Jehovah he went so far as to deny that they were worshipping the real Jehovah. Such passages as 8:14; 5:4 f; 4:4 f show that the Bethel cult in his eyes was apostacy from Jehovah. Similar passages are 1:2; 9:1-4. (3) Therefore, in the condemnation of the fundamental idea of that Israelitish religion Amos condemned implicitly every detail of that religion, hence calf-worship along with the rest. Hosea's primary thought is like that of Amos, and even his denunciation of calf-worship is incidental, a mere detail of his more essential indictment of the central element of the system.

This is a very ingenious application of the argument from silence. There are some people who are very much afraid of this argument, as though it were universally invalid and worthless. But here Mr. Paton turns it very cleverly against those who are commonly denounced for their employment of it; or rather he makes it yield an opposite result. Yet the article is not altogether convincing. One feels that single expressions of Amos are interpreted too rigidly, and that the general attitude of the prophet is not that which the proper interpretation of these passages implies. Do the sermons of Amos convey in general the impression that he was addressing a people who had, in his opinion, substituted some other god for Jehovah? It is not by any

means so clear as our author asserts. Another very important consideration, mentioned by the author himself, but its import left unobserved, is that the exilian author of Kings did not regard this calf-worship as anything but Jehovah-worship. If exilic prophets Amos and Hosea held the high view claimed by the author, it was a significant regress made by the exilian prophet-historian. However that difficulty may be explained, it seems to us that Amos neglected to condemn calf-worship, not because he approved of it, nor because he regarded the whole Israelitish religion as heathenish, but because there were other abominations of Jehovah-worship in Israel which impressed him more deeply, other reforms required which appealed to him more strongly. Cf. W. R. Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 176. In other words, the conclusion of our author is valid, though his method of arriving at it is unsatisfactory.

G. S. G.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST. By REV. PROFESSOR GEORGE B. STEVENS, Ph.D., D.D., in his recent book *Doctrine and Life*, pp. 105-121.

The person of Jesus Christ is the great miracle of history. It is at once the mystery and the glory of the religion which is called by his name. Supreme and solitary, Christ stands among men, towering above all others. Yet his superiority to all other men does not involve a separateness from them in interest and sympathy. He is most closely identified with his fellows; he is ideally, intensely human. He is elevated above other men just because he represents humanity in its perfection, because in him we behold our common human nature dignified and glorified by the disclosure of its divine origin and destiny.

We must approach the character of Christ from this human side. We must look upon him as he is presented to us in the clear light of the gospels, and must listen to the words which he speaks to us concerning God and ourselves. He seems to have made it his first concern to induce men to accept his idea of God and his principles of human living, rather than to adopt any particular view of his own personality. A critical, comparative study of the gospels leads to the conclusion that he was very slow to announce himself as the Messiah, and that he wished to avoid exciting too keen an interest in the discussion of the nature of his person. His characteristic truths, however, concerning God and man and duty, he was always urging upon the minds of men. He certainly made important claims respecting his person and mission; but he seemed willing to let these claims take care of themselves, if only men would repent of sin, believe in God, and try to live lives of unselfish love. His ideal of life is the highest possible—likeness to God himself; and his interpretation of life's true meaning opens to the spirit of man a large, free world of thought and achievement. While he had the keenest sense of what was sinful and wrong, he never in any way implied that he was personally conscious of sin. His marvelous knowledge of the human heart and character excludes the supposition that he did not know himself. He was conscious of perfect holiness of motive and action, of perfect harmony in purpose and desire with the will of God.

When we approach the character of Jesus, we see at once that there is something absolutely unique about it. It is peculiar just because it possesses no "peculiarities." None of the words which designate a peculiar type of man are applicable to him. Wonderfully energetic, patient and persevering, yet no enthusiast; wonderfully calm, quiet, and even reserved, yet no recluse. All other qualities of the truest manhood belong to him, but are set in perfect equipoise with what we are accustomed to call the opposite qualities. In Jesus it is no special quality or qualities which attract attention, but the rounded completeness of the whole character. The ideal character is found only in the complete, symmetrical development of the total man. This completeness of character we see in Jesus when we consider the harmony of will and emotion, of firmness and tenderness, which always characterized his life. The completeness of Jesus' life is also seen in the fact that in him appears no single, local, or national type of character, but the "universal man." Of Jewish peculiarities and prejudices we find nothing whatever in him. His sympathies are in no degree limited by any boundaries of country or limits of time. They are as wide as the race—as wide as the interests, needs and sins of mankind. Also, in Jesus were blended the qualities which are most truly womanly with those which are considered distinctly masculine.

It is these facts—the elevation of the teaching of Jesus, the dignity of his person, his sinlessness, and positive completeness of character—which, in connection with the special claims which he makes, give rise to the problem of his unique personality. We cannot wonder that the church has asserted that Jesus Christ was more than a man; that no possible compound of mere human qualities could produce such a character. Hence arose the formulation of the doctrine that Jesus Christ mysteriously united in himself both divinity and humanity. This mystery has been accepted and cherished by the greater part of the Christian world, not because the mind was able to construe or resolve it, but because the facts of Christ's teaching, person, and claims were held to require it, and because it was believed to be attested by his power in human life and history. That God should reveal himself through an incarnation in humanity is, indeed, an unparalleled mystery, but is not without some confirmation from analogy. God reveals himself in all his works, and especially in man, who is, in a special sense, kindred in his moral nature to God, and in whom God is believed by all religious minds to make himself felt and known. The moral likeness of man to God suggests the possibility of the incarnation. If, now, the Trinitarian conception of the divine nature be adopted, there remains no formidable barrier to the acceptance of the doctrine of the incarnation. I am convinced that if we can separate the problem of the *method* of the incarnation from the considerations which favor the *fact*, and can frankly admit that the former is an absolute mystery, we shall find that the idea of the incarnation will commend itself as both fitting into the process of biblical revelation, and as answering to the demands of man's religious nature in general, and to the verdict of the Christian consciousness in particular.

C. W. V.